

Theme 2

Weed and health – are we making a hash of it?

Let's talk about the spiders. When some hapless spiders were exposed to the active ingredient in marijuana (tetrahydrocannabinol), they merrily went about building their webs. But over time they began to slow and lose interest in their work. Why is a crackdown on this mind numbing, lung destroying illegal drug that is being abused by so many of this state's youth as almost a common thing, not this countries main priority?

This drug, which is perceived to be as damaging as other illegal drugs, lowers IQ over time and can cause problems with memory and learning. It causes increased heart rate, reduced blood pressure and it may induce hallucinations and delusions. It has the same effect on the lungs and throat as smoking cigarettes.

The truth is that the abuse of drugs ruins the lives of both the user and the user's family. Bringing your attention back to the spiders, many comparisons can be made between the lives of doped up spiders and doped up people. The drugged spiders had left large holes in their webs and a drugged human has large gaps in their life due to memory loss, mood swings and general anti-social behaviour. The drugged spiders slowed down and became tired, a drugged person generally takes more time to process information, mirroring the spiders actions. I personally will never take drugs of any kind as they ruin the lives of all parties concerned. I want to live my life to the full, rather than smoking my opportunities away. Growing up, I know that I will probably be pressured to try hash by some of my peers, but I won't. I also know that other people my age will be tempted to try and there does need to be more awareness about the effects.

Recently, a garda came into our class and gave us a talk on drugs, especially marijuana. When she asked if we knew any street names for the drug, the room was rife with answers. This shows Irish children's overexposure and familiarity with the drug. Lack of awareness about the health problems it causes is a big problem. Marijuana is what's called a gateway drug - this means that it's use can lead to the abuse of other drugs. Marijuana is not seen as a

dangerous drug to many as its so widely used, and is definitely a problem to be tackled.

Recently in Derreenaling, an isolated part of Co. Cork, there was a large drugs bust but this one was different to discoveries of the same size previously. The growers had buried two 40ft containers, parked a mobile home on top and began to grow cannabis. Gardai described it as “the first bunker style growhouse” that they had seen. This shows how suppliers have become much more sophisticated, catering for what has become an industry. We read about it in books and papers and see it on the TV every day - what is now seen as a lesser drug is fuelling an industry. It is becoming a real problem which this country must tackle. In short, weed is bad for you and this country (excuse the pun) is making a hash of dealing with the problem.

References

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effect_of_ps psychoactive_drugs_on_animals

[_Marijuana | National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)

www.drugabuse.gov › [Publications](#) › [DrugFacts](#)

The Irish Examiner, ‘*Cannabis growhouse operation goes underground*’ by Sean O’Riordan April 5th 2013